

and implement collaborative efforts between their criminal justice and mental health systems. This would allow, for example, a State corrections department to partner with the mental health system to ensure that people with mental illness released from prison are provided medications and connected to community-based service providers. It also could provide for programs to train local law enforcement on responding to individuals with mental illness. These programs would be proposed and controlled by the local and State officials most knowledgeable about the needs of their communities.

Since its inception, our Nation has stood on the foundations of compassion and justice. These programs envisioned by this bill are a wonderful embodiment of both ideals and have earned a broad coalition of support from law enforcement, mental health advocates, state officials and private groups, including the Council of State Governments, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Police Executive Research Forum, and the American Correctional Association. With this bill, we move closer to both addressing the needs of the mentally ill and easing the burden upon our police and correctional workers. It will make a real difference, and I thank my colleagues—especially Ranking Member LEAHY, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator DURBIN, Senator DOMENICI, Senator CANTWELL, Chairman HATCH, and Senator MURRAY for their support. I would also like to thank Congressman STRICKLAND and Chairman SENSENBRENNER for championing this issue on the House side.

#### RETIREMENT OF VEE BURKE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay a tribute to Vee Burke, specialist in income maintenance, Domestic Social Policy Division, a dedicated and gifted employee at the Congressional Research Service, who will be retiring from CRS at the end of this month.

Mrs. Burke is a graduate of the University of Chicago. She has four grown children and is the widow of Vincent Burke with whom she wrote Nixon's Good Deed, a book about Nixon's welfare reform proposals.

When Mrs. Burke joined CRS more than 30 years ago, she was already a recognized expert in the field of public welfare. During her tenure at CRS, she became a leading expert on the history, evolution and interaction of welfare and public assistance programs for low-income individuals and families.

Because of her stature as one of the leading authorities in the country in this policy area, Mrs. Burke's advice and assistance has often been required by the Congress. Over three decades, Mrs. Burke has contributed to major congressional deliberations affecting AFDC and related public assistance programs, including the sweeping welfare reforms enacted in 1996 that replaced AFDC with TANF.

During the consideration of the reauthorization of the 1996 welfare reform legislation in both the 107th and the 108th Congress, Mrs. Burke provided invaluable assistance to the Senate Finance Committee. In the 108th Congress, Mrs. Burke was especially helpful to myself, as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and to my staff. She assisted in the drafting of the committee mark and legislation, providing technical assistance as well as continuously analyzing state data. Because of her vast knowledge, Mrs. Burke also functioned as an impromptu tutor to Senate Finance Committee staff on this history of welfare.

The work of the Congress is detailed and complex—in order to do our work members and our staffs need to be well versed in policy in order for us to make the best decisions. For this expertise, we often rely on the analysis of the Congressional Research Service. CRS provides a unique service to the Congress in that they are truly non-partisan. The specialists from CRS provide non-biased, research based analysis that helps guide us, as policymakers, to make the best decisions.

Mrs. Burke, throughout her long and admirable career, has embodied the very best of what CRS provides for the Congress. Those of us who care deeply about programs affecting the poor thank her for her efforts, will miss her and wish her well.

#### RETIREMENT OF SHARON HICKEY

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to express my deep gratitude and best wishes to a dedicated and long-serving member of my Washington staff, Sharon "Sherry" Hickey, who has worked on Capitol Hill for nearly 31 years and who is retiring from the U.S. Senate on December 3, 2004.

Sherry has been a member of my Senate family since I was first elected to this office in January 1989. She has many talents, "wears many hats," is always willing to lend a hand or offer guidance, and her contributions to the work of this office, particularly in the area of constituent outreach, have been invaluable. She began in my office as assistant to the chief of staff and military caseworker. As caseworker, she most clearly demonstrated her compassion and empathy for others. Sherry assisted many grateful soldiers and their families in my home State of Connecticut, including during the first Gulf War, by intently listening to their concerns and successfully resolving the variety of problems they faced to the fullest extent possible.

Sherry is also a gifted and eloquent writer. As my personal/legislative correspondent, she has researched and drafted responses for literally thousands of constituent communications on important issues before Congress, as well as requests for tribute, congratulatory, and recommendation letters that I have received over the years. With her expressive, articulate, and in-

tuitive communication skills, Sherry has a knack for preparing responses to each of them in the informative, yet personalized, style that I prefer.

Prior to the good fortune that brought her to my office, Sherry first began her Hill career when she was hired by Representative John Melcher (D-MT) in December 1973. Following his election to the Senate in 1976, Sherry remained on his staff as a personal assistant and consumer affairs caseworker until he left office in 1988. Previously, she served as secretary to the Assistant Director of the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Bureau of the Mint from 1967-1971.

Some may find it surprising to learn that, among her many hidden abilities, Sherry is a talented artist. Perhaps her retirement will afford her more time to pursue this interest. Still, what has always been most important to Sherry is her family. She met her husband Peter while she was a member of Senator Melcher's staff; and their son, Brian, of whom they are both enormously proud, spent 2 years as a toddler at the Senate Employees Child Care Center. Sherry often brought Brian to the office for a visit, so it is hard for me to believe that he has since achieved the Boy Scout rank of Eagle Scout and is now a second-year student at the University of Virginia! For her own part, after spending precious time devoted to raising her son and guiding him along the path toward adulthood, Sherry applied her energies after work, and, with her usual determination, completed her Associate in Science degree from Northern Virginia Community College earlier this year.

Sherry has had an exemplary career and fully understands the value of a public service commitment to help others. She has always had a special caring touch in reaching out to the constituents we serve and getting them the help they need and deserve. She has provided a guiding hand and has been a resource and support to so many members of my staff. Sherry has what some may call an "old-fashioned" work ethic, but it is one based on immense pride and satisfaction in a job well done. I can certainly attest to that.

Sherry is proud to be a native Washingtonian, and she can now be proud of the years she has dedicated to my State of Connecticut and to the State of Montana. I know her well-deserved retirement will afford her many new opportunities. Sherry has made many friends on the Hill, and we will miss her ready smile and kindness. It is with great fondness and my personal thanks that I wish her only the best in whatever direction she chooses to go from here. Congratulations on a job well done!

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the